

A. Working with Youth and Schools

Objective	The perception that many members of the public have of courts often comes from secondhand sources. For example, television, radio, and newspapers have a major influence on the way in which people view courts. Court community outreach programs designed with youth in mind provide a positive perspective of the justice system. By observing and participating in the justice system, students learn about their rights and responsibilities under the law, understand the legal consequences of their actions, and open doors to career opportunities. Students see how the justice system works and how it can affect their lives. Programs for youth also show the community that courts have an interest in educating children about the role of courts in society, with particular emphasis on the function of courts in nonviolent dispute resolution.
Potential Audience	Teens, elementary and middle school students, at-risk youth, and youth who are victims or witnesses of crimes (not an exhaustive list).
Format	Mock trials, actual court sessions at schools, comprehensive education programs, courthouse tours, law clubs, peer courts, school partnerships.
Content	Conflict resolution, operations of the legal system, trial observations and chambers conferences, subjects and issues in law and government-related fields, court functions and responsibilities, basic legal principles and procedures, roles in the court system, and career opportunities.
Getting the Word Out	Partner with schools and other agencies to display and distribute brochures, and publish announcements and articles in newsletters. Distribute news releases and feature articles to the local news media.
Evaluation	Forms can be distributed to participants at the end of a program or activity asking them both to evaluate content, presentation, location, and timing and to solicit issues of interest for future programs. A request for information about other groups or organizations that may be interested in sponsoring a program for youth should be included.



Key Points for Organizing Programs for Youth and Schools

1. Meet with students, teachers, school administrators, and members of school boards, as well as community organizations serving youth, to determine the needs of students and youth. (See *Samples & Tools*.)
2. Identify and recruit volunteers within the justice system to participate in developing and implementing specific programs in partnership with schools and other community groups. Identify and solicit in-kind and financial support from agencies, businesses, and community organizations.
3. Develop goals and objectives of the program, curriculum and materials, and operating guidelines.
4. Work with partners in promoting the programs among students and youth. Send news releases and announcements to the news media and allied organizations.



What Works

Effective programs that teach young people about the justice system are most effective when they include opportunities to observe and participate in both mock and real-life court situations. Such programs can be conducted at schools or at the courthouse.

Programs: Taking Court to School

Taking the court to the schools gives students a front row seat to observe the justice system in action. It also saves time and the costs of transporting students to the courthouse. Students personally witness how a court operates and how disputes are settled in a courtroom setting.

In cooperation with the community's high schools, the **Superior Court of California, County of Butte**, conducts small claims court at the schools where the judge, court clerk, bailiff, and litigants meet at the high school on the court day to conduct trials. Classes rotate during the school day so that students may observe cases in progress. In order to hold court at school sites it was necessary for the Butte County Board of Supervisors to designate the schools as court sites. (Contact: William Scott, 530-895-6502. See *Samples & Tools* for a letter to litigants and a copy of the ordinance enacted by the Board of Supervisors.)

In southern California, the **Superior Court of California, County of Orange**, convenes actual court sessions of small claims and traffic trials at local high school campuses. Students have the opportunity to ask questions of the judge, court staff, and representatives from police agencies. Law enforcement agencies and local school districts are also involved in this program. (Contact: Lyle Robertson, 714-472-6985.)

Programs: Mock Trials

Role playing allows students to experience in a positive way what it is like to take part in the justice system. Mock trials give students the opportunity to get inside the system and experience how it works and how the different players relate to each other.

The **Los Angeles Municipal Court** uses the mock trial method with students from the Aviva Center, a residential placement facility for adolescent girls. Ten students are selected to participate in a 7-week program in which they develop their own tactics in handling a legal case. One or two bench officers work with the students for the 7-week program. The scenario involves either a misdemeanor violation such as shoplifting or a



civil trial involving a landlord-tenant dispute. The bench officer reviews topics with the students, including questions of fact and law, burden of proof, evidence, and examination of witnesses as preparation for their mock trial. Practicing lawyers from the private bar, Public Defender's Office, and City Attorney's Office are invited to help students develop their roles.

The mock trial is videotaped and students review the proceedings with the bench officer. By the end of the program, students have established a beneficial relationship with the judge or commissioner and have learned valuable lessons about the justice system. An additional benefit is that some students who are ordinarily withdrawn, often due to family difficulties, become more confident and outgoing through the experience of the mock trial. (Contact: Marcia Skolnik, 213-974-6358. See *Samples & Tools* for the Criminal Case Lesson Plan.)

Programs: Peer Courts

Being judged by one's peers for a real offense is a powerful tool for teaching students about both the consequences of their actions and the justice system. Experience in a peer court can have a life-changing impact on the student.

In the **San Diego County Youth Court Program**, sponsored by **South Bay Trial Courts**, juveniles who have admitted to committing a non-felony offense are given an opportunity to be "judged" by a jury of their peers. In admitting their wrongdoing and fulfilling the conditions of their sentence, the juveniles are given a "second chance" to become law-abiding citizens. (Contact: Brian Blackwood, 619-531-4120.)

Peer court programs can evolve into formal diversion programs, as is the case with the **Superior Court of California, County of Orange, Peer Court Program in Juvenile Court**. This **Teen Court** program resulted from the need for a formal diversion program with meaningful sanctions for minors involved in committing lesser offenses. This program was initiated at two high schools where students volunteered to sit as jurors. The Peer Court program benefited over the next three years from a grant awarded by the Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning (1995–1998). In addition to the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department, the collaborative included the Constitutional Rights Foundation, the Orange County Department of Education, Orange County Bar Foundation, and a cadre of volunteer judges, attorneys, and volunteers in probation services. Fifteen high schools host Peer Court on campus and in the month of August each year; the program is conducted in the county courthouse during the evening. The program is currently funded by the Probation Department that provides case management services and contracts other services. (Contact: Kari Sheffield, 714-935-6600. See *Samples & Tools* for brochure.)



Programs: School/Court Curriculum Partnerships

Instructional education programs can help teachers fill the gap in school curriculums that often do not include civics classes until later high school years. Subjects and issues in law and government-related fields are the focus of these programs, followed by hands-on work experience in the justice system. (See “Resources for Education Collaboration” in Section 2 for curriculum partnership resources.)

As part of the **Law and Government Magnet Program** at James Monroe High School, judges and commissioners of the **Los Angeles Municipal Court** speak to students on topics such as the U.S. Constitution, search and seizure, arrest and booking, types of criminal procedures, and types of laws. Judges and court staff, including the courtroom clerk, bailiff, court reporter, court interpreter, and court managers, also discuss how they achieved their professional goals.

When classroom instruction is completed, students participate in a public service role within the community through the Municipal and Superior Courts, the Sheriff’s Department, and the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office. Students work in the clerk’s office, observe courtroom proceedings, accompany sheriff’s deputies, and work in the office of the City Attorney. (Contact: Marcia Skolnik, 213-974-6358. See *Samples & Tools* for planning and organization materials.)

Programs: Incentives to Learn

Rewarding young students for a job well done encourages them to want to learn even more. Activities that celebrate students’ efforts make learning fun and exciting, and generate enthusiasm for participating in the justice system.

The First Impressions Project, sponsored by the **Los Angeles Municipal Court** in partnership with Operation Field Trip, Laidlaw Corporation, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and Ticketmaster, makes the justice system come alive for fourth and fifth grade students. The project relies on the collaboration of many individuals and organizations. For example, all services provided by the attorneys are on a volunteer basis. The collaborative contributions of each of the project partners is noted in the program description below.

The objectives of the program are to: (1) increase young people’s understanding of the legal profession and court system; (2) clarify any misconceptions about, and develop trust and respect for, the justice system; (3) present an opportunity to explore careers in the criminal justice system; (4) help students understand rules, authority, and nonviolent dispute settlement; and (5) help students understand how the court system fits into the three-part system of government.



First Impressions Program Components

<i>Description</i>	<i>Partner Contributions</i>
<i>School presentations</i>	
Volunteer attorneys visit the schools and present an introduction to the justice system. Through interactive games and exercises, students gain a basic knowledge of what happens in a courtroom, learn the difference between civil and criminal cases, and learn about the separation of powers between the branches of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The attorneys are representatives from various bar associations within the city, as well as the Offices of the District Attorney, City Attorney, and Public Defender. ➤ Since civics is not part of the elementary school curriculum, teachers are given lesson plans and curriculum guides developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation and the court. Course materials are sent to the schools at least one week prior to the beginning of the program.
<i>Field trip to court</i>	
The students visit local courthouses to view court sessions and meet judges, public and private attorneys, and court staff, including the courtroom clerk, bailiff, court reporter, court interpreter, and court managers. While in court, judges and support staff discuss their occupations and how they achieved their professional goals, and they reinforce the lessons learned in the classroom about the court system. The students also engage in a mock trial, led by volunteer lawyers and docents, in which they learn the role of the judge, lawyers, jurors, witnesses, and court staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All of the busing for this project is provided free by Operation Field Trip, an education partnership between the Los Angeles Unified School District, Laidlaw Transit, and corporate and community leaders. ➤ The attorneys are representatives from various bar associations within the city, as well as the Offices of the District Attorney, City Attorney, and Public Defender.
<i>Volunteer docents</i>	
An essential component of the project involves working with community-based block clubs and citizens advisory boards to recruit volunteer docents from the Southeast Los Angeles community. These volunteers are trained by court staff to lead student tours at local courthouses, thereby ensuring the continuation of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Docents are usually retired senior citizens who reside in the area served by the schools.



First Impressions Program Components

<i>Description</i>	<i>Partner Contributions</i>
<p><i>Essay contest</i></p> <p>The students are invited to enter an essay contest to write about their experiences with the program, and the top three winners from each grade level are awarded a field trip for themselves and their parents or legal guardians.</p>	<p>➤ Ticketmaster “Tickets for Kids” has paid the cost of tickets for the winners of the essay contests that follow the program. Universal Studios has also provided free tickets for essay contest winners.</p>

The First Impressions Project has been honored with a 1996 Ralph N. Kleps Award from the Judicial Council of California, an Award of Merit from the 1996 American Bar Association Partnership Awards, and a 1997 National Association of Counties Achievement Award. In addition, First Impressions was named one of the top ten projects in the 1997 Los Angeles County Productivity and Quality Awards, and one of ten trophy winners in the 1997 California State Association of Counties Challenge Awards; it received Honorable Mention in the 1997 National Association of Court Management Justice Achievement Awards competition.

For more information on the First Impressions Project, please contact Marcia Skolnik, Director of the Los Angeles Municipal Court’s Public Affairs Office, at 213-974-6358, to obtain a diskette with the following course materials:

- Outline and description of the program
- *A Student’s Introduction to the Justice System and Taking the Courthouse to Kids and Kids to the Courthouse*, prepared by the Constitutional Rights Foundation
- Task breakdown
- A student guide to the Los Angeles Municipal Court
- Attorney volunteer form
- Training materials
- Attorney recruitment letter
- Confirmation letter to a principal
- Letter from judges to recruit attorneys
- Tour confirmation letter to a bus company
- Response form
- Letter to judicial officers requesting participation in the courthouse tour component
- Attorney training confirmation letter
- Certificate of participation
- Agenda for training session
- Essay contest notice

Programs: Work Experience

On-site jobs and internships give at-risk students the opportunity to gain professional work experience and explore career opportunities. This experience also enhances a student’s resume and college applications. Meaningful duties, thoughtful and ongoing



evaluations, and responsible mentoring make the work experience productive and rewarding for both the student and supervisor.

Through a partnership with the Private Industry Council of the City of Santa Ana, the **Superior Court of California, County of Orange**, hires 30 to 50 high school students for paid entry-level office positions and special assignments. Student eligibility is based on economic considerations. In addition to daily supervision by court staff, a coordinator from the City of Santa Ana meets with the students throughout their employment to determine their progress and to obtain their input on their employment. Court supervisors also prepare standard performance evaluations upon completion of summer employment. (Contact: Linda Moore, 714-834-5811.)

At-risk youth in San Diego can apply for the justice internship program at the **South Bay Trial Courts**. This program is a three-way partnership of school counselors, the court, and law enforcement. Students are selected by their school counselors to spend approximately two hours a week for ten weeks with an assigned mentor in the criminal justice arena. Students are matched with a new mentor during each of the ten weeks so that they gain a broad experience of the justice system. Individuals and agencies involved with this program are the Sheriff, Marshal, District Attorney's Office, court reporters, Probation Department, court interpreters, Public Defender's Office, San Diego Police Department, Pre-Trial Services, and Family Court.

During the last week of the program students participate in a mock trial using transcripts of actual cases. To complete the program and receive academic credit, students must write a report about their experience.

An officer in the Juvenile Department of the San Diego Police Department initiated this program by personally contacting the juvenile judge. The judge then sent a memo to colleagues and staff inviting them to be mentors. The invitation received an overwhelmingly positive response. The officer then promoted the program face-to-face to school counselors. (Contact: Sylvia Vella, 619-531-2240, for information about organizing this program; and Rick Kruger, 619-424-0400, for current activities.)

**Some
Advice**

It is critical that the juvenile judge supports such a program and is willing to follow through in recruiting mentors. As for logistics, it is recommended that the school transport students to the courthouse.



Programs: Youth Information

Even a little bit of knowledge goes a long way toward eliminating ignorance and alleviating fear among youth who are crime victims or witnesses. Developing and making available public information programs and materials for youth can answer their questions, allay their fears, and assure them of their rights and responsibilities. Children feel supported, and court proceedings can run more smoothly.

Knowing what is going to happen can make all the difference in a child's experience in court. **The Kids' Court program** at the **Superior Court of California, County of Tehama, Red Bluff**, prepares kids between 4 and 18 who are either victims or witnesses in upcoming cases for their appearance in court. Prior to the hearing, the youths and their parents are invited to come to the courthouse. They view the movie *Taking the Stand* and afterwards ask questions of the judge, District Attorney, defense attorneys, court reporter, clerk, and bailiff who volunteer their time to Kids' Court.

Children meet as a group to talk about their feelings, practice relaxation techniques, and role play. Each child receives a coloring book and a stuffed animal, which they can bring to court. Parents also meet as a group to express their feelings and concerns and to learn how to support their child.

The Kids' Court has developed two information folders for their program. (Contact: Michelle Cook, 530-527-3053.)

The first folder of information is designed for the children participating in the program. It includes:

- An invitation to Kids' Court
- A coloring book
- *Kids' Prescription for Stress*
- *Feeling Faces*
- *What Would I Do If ...*
- *A Relaxation Journey*
- A Certificate of Completion

The second folder of information is designed for the parents of children participating in the program. It includes:

- An invitation letter
- A schedule
- An introduction to Kids' Court
- An evaluation form
- *A Parental Guide for When Your Child Testifies in Court*
- *Information on Crime Victims' Compensation*
- *Superior Court of California, County of Tehama, Victim/Witness Program*
- *Mom, I'm Not Scared Anymore*
- *After the Ordeal: A Mother Shares Her Daughters' Stories*
- *Animal Crackers ... A Celebration of Life*
- *Victim Advocacy: Getting Through the Criminal Justice Maze*
- *Responding to Child Sexual Abuse*



Some Advice	When organizing a Kids' Court, line up volunteers early and confirm the date of the program with them. Send invitations to parents at least two weeks in advance of the program. Make follow-up calls to parents a week before the program to make sure they received an invitation and to answer their questions. Be prepared to explain Kids' Court in simple terms, and let parents know their child can bring a friend.
-------------	---

In **Orange County**, youth can easily get information about the laws that affect them in the publication *Laws for Youth*, published in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The **Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission**, with the support of the court and numerous agencies and individuals, publishes this booklet to inform youth about the laws pertaining to issues that directly affect them, including:

- Alcohol, drugs, tobacco
- Crimes
- Family law
- Guns and other weapons
- Juvenile justice system
- Recreation
- School
- Torts and contracts
- Transportation
- Work

The booklet is very popular with schools, so if you're considering producing such a publication, keep in mind storage and shipping. (Contact: Kari Sheffield, 714-935-6600.)

The **Placer County Peer Court** program has prepared the *Juvenile Justice Handbook* for use in the schools to educate students about their legal rights and responsibilities. This publication was prepared by the Placer County Peer Court Board of Directors under sponsorship by the Placer County Office of Education, Placer County S.M.A.R.T., and the Placer County Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission. Its purpose is to answer many questions posed by Placer County youth and their parents. It was based on "Laws for Youth" prepared and distributed by the Legal Auxilliary of Sacramento County and the Citizenship & Law-Related Education Center. (Contact: Hon. J. Richard Couzens, Placer County Juvenile Court, 530-889-6571.)

The State Bar of California has produced *Kids and the Law: An A-Z Guide for Parents*. The booklet was written in an easy-to-read, user-friendly format. It can be read by parents or their children, but is primarily intended for parents. It also can be helpful to teachers, social workers, and other professionals who care for or work with young people in California. The subjects included are:

- Age of majority
- Alcohol and kids
- Bikes, skateboards, and skates
- Graffiti
- Guns and other dangerous weapons
- Hate crimes and hate
- Privacy and kids
- Receiving stolen property
- Schools and school rules



- Cars, kids and traffic laws
- Civil laws and lawsuits
- Criminal law and crimes
- Curfew laws
- Disturbing the peace
- Drugs and kids
- Emancipation
- Fights and fighting
- Gangs, gang colors, and dress codes
- speech
- Juvenile court
- Kids in need of supervision
- Loitering
- Parents' rights and responsibilities
- Police and police encounters
- Sex and kids
- Smoking and kids
- Stealing and shoplifting
- Truancy
- Vandalism
- Work, work permits, and taxes
- Zero tolerance

The booklet is available on the State Bar of California's Web site at www.calbar.org/2pub/3kids/4kisint or at 415-561-8200.



Samples & Tools

- ✓ **Tool: Letter to Teachers and School Administrators**
- ✓ **Sample: Letter to Small Claims Litigant Explaining Small Claims Goes to School**
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Butte
- ✓ **Sample: Ordinance Designating Schools as Court Sites**
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Butte
- ✓ **Sample: Mock Trial Criminal Case Lesson Plan – Los Angeles Municipal Court Aviva Center Program**
Source: Los Angeles Municipal Court
- ✓ **Sample: Brochure, Orange County Peer Court: A Juvenile Diversion Program**
Source: Superior Court of California, County of Orange
- ✓ **Sample: Outline of Monroe High School Law and Government Magnet Student Internship Program**
Source: Los Angeles Municipal Court
- ✓ **Sample: Brochure, The First Impressions Project**
Source: Los Angeles Municipal Court



Date

XXX XXX XXX
XXX XXX XXX
XXX XXX XXX

Dear :

I'm writing to inform you of the various programs the (name) Court sponsors to give students a positive perspective and experience of the justice system. We believe that when we give students opportunities to observe and participate in the justice system, they will see how the justice system works and how it can affect their lives.

The programs below are designed to help students learn about their rights and responsibilities under the law, understand the legal consequences of their actions, and open doors to career opportunities.

Taking Court to School

Students have a front row seat to observe the justice system in action when we take court to school. The judge, court clerk, bailiff, and litigants meet at your school to conduct small claims court. Students witness how a court operates and how disputes are settled in a courtroom setting.

Mock Trials

Role playing allows students to learn what it's like to take part in the justice system. Mock trials give students the opportunity to get inside the system and experience how it works and how the different players relate to each other.

Peer Courts

Being judged by one's peers for a real offense is a powerful tool for teaching students both the consequences of their actions and the way the justice system works. Experience in a peer court can have a life-changing impact on the student.



Curriculum Partnerships

Instructional education programs can help teachers fill the gap in school curriculums that often do not include civics classes until later high school years. Subjects in law and government-related fields are the focus of these programs, followed by hands-on work experience in the justice system.

Incentives to Learn

Rewarding young students for a job well done encourages them to want to learn even more. In our program for fourth- and fifth-grade students, we make the justice system come alive. Volunteer attorneys will go to your school and present an introduction to the criminal justice system. Students then visit the courthouse to view court sessions and meet judges and court staff. After these activities, the students may enter an essay contest and write about their experiences. First-, second-, and third-place winners from each grade level receive a special award.

We welcome the opportunity to conduct these programs at your school and to assist you in developing additional programs that meet the specific needs of your students. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Sample: Letter to Small Claims Litigant Explaining Small Claims Goes to School

Dear Small Claims Litigant:

As you will note from the court documents that have been provided to you in connection with your small claims court matter, your case has been scheduled for hearing at the Chico Senior High School in Chico. This letter is written with reference thereto.

Our court is most concerned about our community's young people understanding what our court system is all about and how it actually works, as opposed to what is shown on television or in movies. As a result, we have instituted a program of having actual trials conducted at the area high schools so students can see, firsthand, how their court system works. The trials will be conducted in exactly the same manner as if they were held at the courthouse; only the location of the hearings will be different.

Because respect for, and understanding of, our judicial system is so important to our form of government, we look forward to your cooperation in this program. On the day of your trial, please go to Room L-13 at Chico Senior High School located at the corner of West Sacramento Avenue and The Esplanade. A map of the high school campus is enclosed, and room L-13 is marked "Court . ." A visitor parking pass is being provided to you for parking at either of the two parking lots shown on the map. However, the school officials advise that parking is at a premium so you should arrive well in advance of your court time just in case you have to park off campus and walk to the location of the court hearing. Should you be lucky enough to find a parking space on campus, please place the parking pass on your dashboard.

We look forward to your participation in what we trust will be a valuable learning experience for our students.

Very truly yours,

Darrell W. Stevens
Supervising Judge



Sample: Ordinance Designating Schools as Court Sites

Ordinance No. 3151

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF BUTTE
ADDING SECTION 2-26.2 TO CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE V
OF THE BUTTE COUNTY CODE

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Butte, State of California, ordains as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to Government Code Sections 71341 and 71342 a county board of supervisors is authorized to designate various places within a municipal court district where sessions of the municipal court may be held. Government Code Section 71342 further permits a county board of supervisors to make such designations from time to time as the public convenience requires.

Section 2. The North Butte County Municipal Court desires to conduct some of its proceedings within the public and private high schools of the Town of Paradise and City of Chico in order to further enhance the accessibility of the court to the public and to educate the students of those institutions in the workings of the Municipal Court system. The Board of Supervisors of the County of Butte concurs with this stated goal.

Section 3. Section 2-26.2 is added to Article V of Chapter 2 of the Butte County Code and shall read as follows:

“Section 2-26.2

The north and south county judicial districts may from time to time within their respective districts for which each court is established designate locations within public and private educational institutions wherein their departments may conduct sessions.”

Section 4. Severability. If any part of this ordinance shall be held void by a court of competent jurisdiction, such part shall be deemed severable, and the invalidity thereof shall not affect the remaining parts of this ordinance.

Section 5. Effective Date; Publication. This ordinance shall be and is hereby declared to be in full force and effect 30 days from the date of its passage (Government Code Section 25123). Within fifteen days of the date of its passage, this ordinance shall be published once with the names of the members of the Board of Supervisors voting for and against it in the Enterprise Record a newspaper published in the County of Butte, State of California.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Butte, State of California, on the 23rd day of August, 1994, by the following votes:



Mock Trial

Criminal Case Lesson Plan

Week A Orientation to Aviva House for mock trial coordinator judge

Week 1 Both bench officers

1. Introduction to mock trial and class project
 - a. Explain schedule for whole course
2. Show video Anatomy of a Criminal Trial
 - a. Role of the judge
 - b. Jury court trial
 - c. Questions of law
3. Hand out materials to participants
 - a. Witnesses should not share their stories with anyone
 - b. Defense attorney and prosecutor get their witnesses' statements only
4. Go over general fact scenario

Week 2 Judge and visiting prosecutor

1. Role of a prosecutor
2. Visiting prosecutor
3. Burden of proof
 - a. Guilty beyond a reasonable doubt
 - b. Elements—establish the basic case
4. Questions and answers with prosecutor

Week 3 Judge

1. Direct examination
 - a. Open-ended questions—who, what, where, why, when, and how?
2. Evidence and objections
3. Spin off the factual scenarios from script and their implications
4. Talk about what the prosecutor must prove in *People v. Ronnie R.*



**Sample: Mock Trial Criminal Case Lesson Plan — Los Angeles Municipal Court
Aviva Center Program (continued)**

Page Two

Week 4 Judge and visiting defense counsel

1. Role of a defense attorney
 - a. Presumption of innocence
 - b. Right to counsel in all criminal cases
 - i. Liberty in issue
2. Visiting defense attorney
 - a. Can suggest the answer, is it fair to say . . .
3. Questions and answers with defense counsel

Week 5 Judge

1. Defenses — no criminal intent, identification, alibi
2. Cross examination
3. Defenses that may be raised in *People v. Ronnie R.*

Week 6 Judge

1. Prepare and rehearse mock trial with individual attorneys and sides
2. Opening statements
3. Final arguments
4. Arguments vs. what is evidence

Week 7 Judge (2-hour session)

1. Conduct mock trial in a courtroom setting
2. Videotape mock trial for replay next week

Week 8 Judge and visiting prosecutor and defense counsel

1. Review video of mock trial
2. Critique what happened, including witnesses critiquing attorney examinations
3. Defense attorney and prosecutor also comment
4. Suggest additional scenarios for future mock trials



JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The juvenile must comply with the Peer Court orders within six months to successfully complete probation and to have the case dismissed. The juvenile is eligible to have his/her record sealed after reaching age 18.

Conditions of Informal Probation may include any of the sanctions listed below:

- Obey curfew
- Pay restitution
- Attend counseling
- Obtain employment
- Attend school regularly
- Complete traffic school
- Perform community service
- Attend legal education classes
- Not use or possess illicit drugs
- Attend Alcoholics Anonymous
- Not possess dangerous weapons
- Participate in a Peer Court session
- Interview a victim and write an essay
- Not associate in negative peer relationships
- Attend alcohol, tobacco, or other drug education

WHO COORDINATES ORANGE COUNTY PEER COURT?

Orange County Superior Court

- *Judges serve as co-coordinators of*

Orange County Peer Court Council

- *Judges are recruited to preside at Peer*

Court sessions

Orange County Probation Department

- *Screens juvenile offenders and assigns to*

Peer Court

- *Recruits, trains, and schedules volunteer*

probation officers for Peer Court

- *Monitors the completion of sanctions by*

the juvenile offender

- *Refers cases to appropriate community*

resources

Orange County Department of Education

- *Coordinator participates on Peer Court*

session team

- *Develop and maintain Peer Court*

curriculum

Constitutional Rights Foundation of

Orange County

- *Maintains and coordinates the master*

schedule for Peer Court sites

- *Presents parent orientation meeting*

preceding each Peer Court session

- *Locates high school Peer Court sites*

Recruits, trains, and schedules volunteer

attorneys for Peer Court sessions

- *Recruits and schedules judges for Peer*

Court sessions

- *Trains and schedules student bailiffs*

Orange County Peer Court is funded by the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

ORANGE COUNTY Peer Court A Juvenile Diversion Program



Sample: Brochure, Orange County Peer Court: A Juvenile Diversion Program (continued)

Back

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Orange County Peer Court is to change illegal activities of juvenile offenders by focusing upon practical and educational experiences for students and their families in the courtroom, classroom, and at home, to teach individual accountability and responsible decision making.

WHAT IS PEEER COURT?

Peer Court is an alternative sentencing program operating under the authority of the Orange County Juvenile Court and the Orange County Probation Department. Peer Court sessions are staffed by volunteer judges, probation officers, attorneys, and by high school students who act as jurors and bailiffs. Peer Court is held during the week on local high school campuses. Court sessions benefit juveniles and their parents, who appear before the court, and are educational opportunities for high school students who act as jurors, bailiffs, and observers.

WHO ATTENDS PEEER COURT?

Juveniles are selected for Peer Court by the Probation Department following their arrest. Criminal charges are pending; however, the youthful offender is not considered a serious threat to public safety. The juvenile must admit guilt, waive his/her right to privacy and waive his/her right to an attorney.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

At the court hearing the jurors listen to the charges regarding the juvenile offender. The juvenile is then allowed to explain his/her side of the story. The jury and the judge inquire about the circumstances to determine appropriate consequences for the illegal behavior.

When there are no additional questions, the jury is excused from the courtroom to discuss the offense, consider the juvenile's involvement in the offense, and agree upon recommended sanctions.

After completing their deliberations, the jurors return to the courtroom and present their sentencing recommendations to the judge. Sentencing recommendations (sanctions) may be modified by the judge, who then orders the juvenile to comply with the sanctions, which may include up to six months of Informal Probation (654 WIC). The Probation Department, assisted by volunteer probation officers, monitors the juvenile's compliance with court orders.

WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE?

- Expedites the judicial process
- offers a responsible alternative to the formal juvenile justice system
- inspires high school students to pursue careers in law or related fields
- provides post court guidance, supervision, and follow-up to ensure compliance
- serves as a constructive educational experience for the participants and observers
- offers an opportunity for personal involvement for the juvenile and his/her parent/caretaker



Sample: Outline of Monroe High School Law and Government Magnet Student Internship Program

Page One

To: LAMC Court Docents

From: Director of Public Affairs
Los Angeles Municipal Court

SUBJECT: WHO TO CONTACT FOR WHAT?

Thank you again for working with the students from Monroe High School. During the five weeks that the students visit with us, we would like to give them a well-rounded look at both the Superior and Municipal Courts. To accomplish this, I am giving you a contact list and some suggestions of what we would like the students to see. I realize that you may not be able to follow this schedule exactly, due to prior commitments on the part of staff or a judicial officer being unavailable, so please feel free to adjust the schedule to suit your needs.

Our primary goal is to allow the students some insight into the workings of the court system. That is why we have them spend a portion of their time in the clerk's office with staff, in addition to going to a courtroom to observe and interact. We want to stress that the work that goes on in the clerk's office is an integral part of what happens in the courtroom.

We appreciate your commitment to helping our young people learn about the justice system. Without volunteers like you — we couldn't offer this outstanding opportunity to the students!

Contacts

Los Angeles Municipal Court:

Division Chief: Name and Telephone Number
Staff Assistant: Name and Telephone Number
Judicial Contact: Name and Telephone Number

Los Angeles Superior Court:

Division Chief: Name and Telephone Number
Staff Assistant: Name and Telephone Number
Judicial Contact: Name and Telephone Number

District Office for the District Attorney's Office

Head Deputy District Attorney: Name and Telephone Number

District Office for the Public Defender's Office

Head Deputy Public Defender: Name and Telephone Number



Sample: Outline of Monroe High School Law and Government Magnet Student Internship Program (continued)

Page Two

District Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney

Head Deputy City Attorney: Name and Telephone Number

Tour Schedule

Week One: **Tuesday:** Tour of the Municipal Court
Contact staff assistant to arrange.
555-5555

Thursday: Tour of the Superior Court
Contact staff assistant to arrange.
555-5555

Week Two: **Tuesday:** Follow a civil case from filing to disposition
Contact civil court manager to arrange.
555-5555

This can be all the students in municipal court, or if you have eight students you can split it up — four in municipal court and four in superior court.

Thursday: Follow a criminal case from filing to disposition.
Follow the same procedure as for a civil case.
Contact criminal court manager to arrange.
555-5555

Week Three: Municipal Court
Split the students into groups of two (or three if you have to) and assign them to a courtroom and a judicial officer for both Tuesday and Thursday sessions. This should be prearranged with the judge or commissioner. Ask the judicial officer contact for help if you need it but here is a list of suggested judges/commissioners that are always receptive to having students in their courtrooms:

(Insert list of judicial officers)

Week Four: Superior Court
Split the students into groups of two (or three if you have to) and assign them to a courtroom and a judicial officer for both Tuesday and Thursday sessions. This should be prearranged with the judge or commissioner. Ask the judicial officer contact for help if you need it but here is a list of suggested judges/commissioners that are always receptive to having students in their courtrooms.

(Insert list of judicial officers)



**Sample: Outline of Monroe High School Law and Government
Magnet Student Internship Program (continued)**

Page Three

Week Five: Split the group between Superior Court and Municipal Court and switch them Thursday. Ask staff assistant in both courts for help in placing the students.

Tuesday: Assign each student to a clerical function or a public window.

Thursday: Assign each student to a clerical function or a public window.

As before, this is only a suggestion. I know you have made contacts with the jury supervisor and others in both courts and you can always adjust the sessions as you see fit.



Sample: Brochure, The First Impressions Project

Front

Dear Judge,

We all had a great time and none of us will never forget that day.

I think that day gave me some information for being what I plan to be in the future, a lawyer.

Angie

Dear Judge,

I really enjoyed visiting you at your job. It was fun. The best part about it was when you were in court and explained to us what we did not understand.

Jamie

Dear Judge,

I have never met a woman judge before. You are very inspiration to girls our age. Thank you for the very nice experience.

Kellie

Dear Judge,

I learned that it is very hard working in a courtroom because you have to deal with other people. You have to decide if you think they person is innocent or guilty.

I did not know that all twelve jurors do not decide if one person is guilty in a civil case. Only nine of them do.

Roy

*The First Impressions Project
has been awarded a 1996 Ralph
N. Kleps Improvement in the
Administration of the Courts
Award by the Judicial Council of
California and an Award of
Merit for Public Education by
the American Bar Association
1996 Partnership Awards.*

The First Impressions Project

THE LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL
COURT COMMITTEE ON THE
COURTS AND THE PUBLIC



SAMPLE: Brochure, The First Impressions Project (continued)

Back

The First Impressions Project

When children think of the word “court” they often associate it with negative experiences, such as those portrayed by the media, in custody battles, divorce cases, and with traffic citations. Many also see the court and judges as a part of law enforcement, as merely an extension of the police, rather than a separate, independent branch of government. Recognizing that informed citizens are basic to our form of government and to our justice system, we are attempting to educate young people about the positive aspects of the system. The Los Angeles Municipal Court Committee on the Courts and the Public developed **The First Impressions Project** to accomplish this goal.

The project reaches out to students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) who receive no civics instruction in their curriculum. The intent of the program is simple: to educate students about the court system and the law by introducing them to local attorneys, judges and courtroom staff.

The program began as a pilot project in April 1996 with two elementary schools from the Jordan-Locke Cluster, a group of seventeen elementary schools in Southeast Los Angeles. The pilot alone reached more than 600 of the 5,000 students in the cluster.

Lawyers from the offices of the City Attorney, Public Defender, District Attorney and private attorneys from all over Los Angeles visit the schools to present an introduction to the courts. The classroom component includes an explanation of the difference between civil and criminal law, discussion about the rights of a U.S. citizen and the separation of powers. The session ends with a mock trial so the students can learn what each person in the courtroom does and how everyone works together.

Following the classroom session, the students visit Los Angeles Municipal Court courthouses to see the system in action. Transportation for the students is provided free of charge by **Laidlaw Corporation** and **Operation Fieldtrip**, an educational partnership between the LAUSD, Laidlaw Transit, Inc., and corporate and community leaders.

With the help of court “docents,” the students tour the courthouse, observe courts in session and meet judges and courtroom staff members. Students learn what judges and court personnel do in the courtroom and what education or training they need to do their jobs. The visits are a new experience to many children. One student remarked to the lawyer escorting his class that it was the first time he had been on an elevator.

The court docents (the word *docent* is derived from the Latin word meaning “to teach”) are volunteers from Southeast Los Angeles who are committed to educating the school children of their community and the public about the court system. Trained by court staff, docents play an important role in the mission of the Los Angeles Municipal Court by sharing their knowledge of the system to promote a better understanding of the judicial branch of government. They lead tours and explain about the people who work in the system, like judges, commissioners, and court staff. The program has eight volunteers who conduct tours for the Jordan-Locke students twice each month.

The final component of the project is an essay contest in which the students are asked to submit an essay about their impressions of the justice system. Special field trips are arranged for the winners from each grade level by **Ticketmaster’s “Tickets for Kids” Program**.

This project has received a generous donation of time and support from the judges of the Los Angeles Municipal Court and other judicial districts, the **Constitutional Rights Foundation**, the lawyers of the L.A. County Bar Barters and the bar association affiliates of the Multi-Cultural Bar Alliance, Black Women Lawyers Association, Japanese American Bar Association, John Langston Bar Association, Korean American Bar Association, Mexican-American Bar Association and the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association, and volunteer attorneys from the offices of the Los Angeles Public Defender, District Attorney and City Attorney.

Reaction to the pilot project has been positive and very encouraging. Once teacher commented, “Because of the program, some of my students are considering studying law and becoming attorneys.”

The students who participate in First Impressions have had little exposure to the world outside their neighborhood. They are receptive young people who can benefit not only from the experience but from the attention they receive from the lawyers, judicial officers and court personnel involved in the project. They will remember the experience and it will give them a positive first impression of the criminal justice system.

